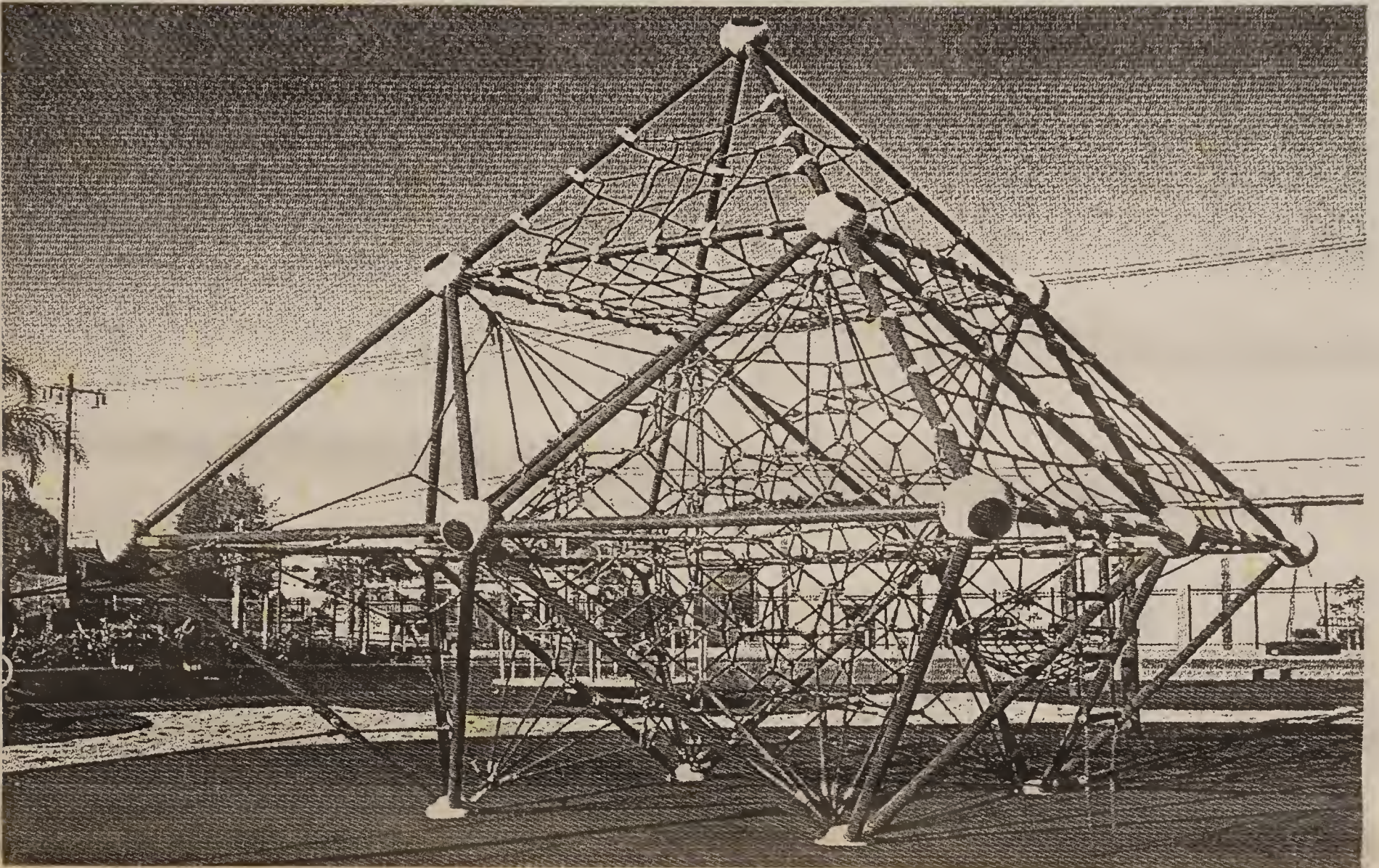


# New Mission News

COMFORTING THE AFFLICTED AND AFFLICTING THE COMFORTABLE SINCE 1980

JULY 2003



**TWO VIEWS of *Parque Niños Unidos*, the Mission's newest park, which opens its gates for a Grand Opening Celebration on Saturday, July 26, from 12 noon until 4 pm. Local activists worked for over eight years to get the city to turn this site from an empty lot into a beautiful place where children can play. It is located between Treat and Folsom at 23<sup>rd</sup> Street.**

**Photos by Sy Matarazzo**



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# Letters to the *New Mission News*

Dear Editor:

The California Republican Party has gone off the deep end. For a sense of perspective, consider the following quote: "We cannot balance our budget with cuts alone, not unless we are willing to lay off thousands of teachers and cancel all extra-curricular activities, open prison doors and put convicted felons back on the streets, and force thousands of seniors out of nursing homes and take away their prescription drugs." This isn't from a liberal Democrat, but from Alabama's Republican governor, Bob Riley.

Here in California, the Republicans in the legislature are sticking to a fanatical no new taxes position. Meanwhile, they are attempting to recall the Governor in the midst of the state's most serious fiscal crisis in decades. The Republicans smell blood and, rather than showing a shred of responsibility toward the state they supposedly serve, they're going for the jugular.

Sincerely yours,

David Fairley  
San Francisco

My name is Melanie Herren and I would like to send you a Poem I wrote after a trip to San Francisco. The poem is being used by the National Coalition Speakers Bureau in Washington in some of their presentations. The second poem was written after my second trip to San Francisco.

I am a client advocate for victims of abuse. I see a great many homeless or formerly homeless women and am very interested in their plight. I understand 'first hand' how a person can become homeless, especially women who have been victims of domestic violence and childhood abuse. I hope you like the poems.

*From Where I was Standing*

*On a cold and rainy day I was walking  
down the streets of San Francisco when I  
Saw something moving in a dark corner  
of a building, something shivering.  
It was, from where I was standing,  
Not human looking, not as I viewed  
humans anyway.  
It was almost animal- like.  
Eyes peered out from under the trashy  
papers and soiled blankets,  
eyes that stared right through me,  
but from where I was standing,  
I could not make out what it was.  
Better for me, I thought.  
I did think, however,  
that if this were a puppy I would pick it  
up, tuck it under my coat next to my heart  
and take it home,  
I would wrap it up in a blanket, give it  
some warm milk and make sure it was  
safe.  
But from where I was standing, I could  
not tell what it was.  
Better for me, I thought. I had problems  
of my own.  
I walked on, but again there was another  
one, the same eyes peered out from under  
the dirty blanket, eyes that told many  
tales, but from where I was standing,  
I could not hear the stories.  
As I walked, it became apparent to me  
that there are many of those eyes under  
those dirty blankets, many stories untold,  
stories locked away in hearts that have  
since grown cold.  
I thought, "Maybe I better get closer,"  
because from where I was standing I  
could not hear what those eyes were  
speaking.*

Melanie Herren

## A FEW WORDS FROM OUR LADY IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi released the following statement following passage of the House Republican Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Appropriations bill by a party-line vote of 215 to 208:*

The Republican Appropriations bill passed by the House today falls a staggering \$8 billion below the funding level of the vaunted 'Leave No Child Behind Act,' leaving millions of children behind.

This bill clearly defines the differences between the parties -- not a single Democrat voted to support this drastic disservice to our nation's education needs.

By voting for this bill -- which does not make the investments in education that Republicans claim to support -- Republicans have shown that all of their rhetoric about supporting education is just that: empty rhetoric.

And why? Because of the Republican Party's misplaced priorities. The Republicans should look America's children in the face and tell them the truth about what they believe: tax cuts for the wealthy are more important than textbooks for your classroom.

Democrats understand that an investment in education is an investment in the strength of our economy. We understand that to improve education, we must improve teacher training. We must raise student achievement in core subjects like reading and math. We must provide early childhood education to help our children enter school ready to learn and after-school centers to help them keep making progress.

This bill fails on all accounts, and, in doing so, it fails parents, fails children, and it fails America.

-Nancy Pelosi

*My Letter To The Homeless....*

*I want to fill your cups.  
Not only with my coins, but with hope,  
I just don't know how,,  
I see your shattered spirit but I can't  
mend it with my coins.  
I want to fill your cup with warmth on a  
cold street night.  
I see us walk over you as if you were not  
there, we step aside so we don't touch  
your tattered clothes,  
My prayer for you is that  
The angels of the street hover above your  
sleeping soul, and softly blow life back  
into you,  
The life we all wanted as children...  
I want to reach into a bottomless bag of  
money and fill your cups every time I see  
you,  
But my coins will not take away your  
sorrow, and they will not fill your soul.  
Maybe you cling to a numbness that  
keeps the pain away, that only your coins  
can buy,  
Maybe I would too, if I were you,  
And maybe I have.  
Maybe the first time you laid down your  
blanket on the cold hard cement...  
Your soul began to die, and you looked  
for a reason to take another breath.  
Yes, I want to fill your cups, give you  
what I was given,  
I want you to see that life can be good  
I want you to know that I do care,  
You, the homeless man, the homeless  
woman, and you the homeless child,  
We are a rich nation , but we are lost  
when we can't kneel down and ask the  
young woman begging for money what  
her name is, or how we can help.  
So instead , we step aside, we step around  
and we step right through your souls...  
Melanie Herren*

If you've spent any time in San Francisco, you've heard of City Tow, the exclusive towing contractor that removes abandoned and illegally parked vehicles from San Francisco streets. People whose cars are towed by City Tow's "service" are forced to pay mandatory set fees to get their vehicles back regardless of how well that service is performed.

Many San Francisco residents claim to have suffered damage to their vehicles and theft of their property while their vehicles were in City Tow's custody. Even more alarming, many individuals report that City Tow unreasonably rejects their claims for damage and theft, forcing them to endure a claims-handling process that is intimidating, time-consuming, expensive and so frustrating that many vehicle owners become discouraged and drop their valid claims, or else they are forced to spend months waiting to take City Tow to small claims court. This happened to me: City Tow dropped my car off a forklift right in front of me, and then denied responsibility for the damage I watched happen, making me wait for months until I finally won in small claims court.

An attorney friend of mine has filed an Unfair Business Practices lawsuit against City Tow in San Francisco, alleging that City Tow violates California Business and

Professions Code § 17200 in the way it conducts its storage, towing, and claims-handling practices. Legal jargon aside, the goal of the lawsuit is to put an end to City Tow's alleged unfair practices and to force City Tow to make restitution to vehicle owners (i.e., refund) of towing and storage fees paid to them. The attorneys are seeking stories from individuals who have had unsatisfactory experiences with City Tow to help their case. I built a website to provide information about the case and to invite people to share their experiences with City Tow at

<http://www.citytowlawsuit.com>. Please contact me through the site if you can help in any way and want to finally do something about City Tow. The level of help you provide is totally up to you and can be as painless as signing an affidavit describing your experience, which the attorneys will prepare for you, or it can be as involved as possibly joining the suit as a plaintiff.

If you are willing to help, you can submit your information to the website, call toll-free and leave a message at (888) 633-4262, or call Anthony Label at 415-434-5320 x 109, who is co-counsel on the case with Eric Farber of Farber and Company, Attorneys LLP. Thank you.

Kimo Fouts

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# Death Takes Jane Dixon

Jane Anne (Doherty) Dixon died of heart failure on June 21. Born on July 4, 1939, in Alexandria, Virginia, Jane lived in and around Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from 1967 to 1992. Then she moved to San Francisco, where she wrote a monthly column, *The Dish in the Mission*, for the *New Mission News*, where she worked as advertising manager for a time. A left-handed writer, Jane loved balloons, butterflies, and the fourth of July.

She is survived by four children: Elizabeth Anne Duddy of Starksboro, Vermont; Deirdre Jane Duddy of West Chester, Pennsylvania; Mark Brian Duddy of San Bruno, California; and Thomas W. W. Dixon of Rowayton, Connecticut; and by her stepfather, Mitchell Chertoff of Bethesda, Maryland, and five grandchildren. She was predeceased by her parents, Olive Johnson Doherty Chertoff and Richard M. Doherty.



Contributions in her name may be made to the Aurora Dawn Foundation, P.O. Box 401076, San Francisco, CA 94140.

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5. MISSION BELL (MEXICAN) <i>Ground Beef, Onions, Fresh Tomatoes, Black Olives, Jalapenos</i>	13.45	16.75	18.65
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10. VALENCIA SPECIAL <i>Artichoke Hearts, Sun-Dried Tomatoes, Garlic, Black Olives, Zucchini</i>	11.85	13.85	15.85

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PLAIN CHEESE	7.95	9.95	12.05
1 TOPPING	8.75	11.15	13.35
2 TOPPINGS	9.85	12.35	14.80
3 TOPPINGS	10.55	13.55	16.25
EACH ADDITIONAL TOPPING	.70	1.00	1.40

### TOPPINGS

Salami • Pepperoni • Sausage • Ground Beef • Ham • Canadian Bacon  
Olives • Garlic • Zucchini • Fresh Spinach • Fresh Tomato • Onion • Pesto  
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## A FEW WORDS FROM



**SUPERVISOR TOM AMMIANO**

# Holding the Police Accountable

Recent police scandals, including the recent indictment of the San Francisco police command structure, have illuminated extremely serious problems within the San Francisco Police Department. It is clear that the City oversight of the Police Department does not adequately address officer misconduct and unnecessary use of force. Moreover, poor management of the Police Department endangers public safety and undermines public trust.

Over the past couple of months, I have worked with trusted third parties including the City Controller, the City Attorney, the Office of Citizen Complaints (OCC) and with the assistance of the San Francisco Police Department, in order to resolve the crisis.

A recent report provided by the SFPD indicates that, for officers who violate the Department General Orders, discipline is usually mild and is not recorded on the officers' permanent record. Furthermore, over the last several years, the SFPD has begun to impose discipline different from that recommended by the OCC. Lax and inconsistent disciplinary procedures send the message that failure to comply with the Department General Orders is not a serious offense and will not result in firm punishment. This signals a management failure within the Police Department that must be addressed.

Police accountability problems are not new to the SFPD. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the OCC have, in the past, submitted complaints and the Police Commission has failed to act. There is clearly a lack of transparency and public oversight in the Department as a result of the way in which the

Commission is structured.

To move the City forward, I am proposing a Police Accountability Charter Amendment in order to reestablish trust, rebuild accountability, and promote public safety.

The Police Accountability Charter Amendment will do two things. First, it reforms the appointment process for the Police Commission. Consistent with the findings of the Controller's review, the measure would require an appointment-sharing between the Mayor and Board of Supervisors. Similar to the reform enacted with the Planning Commission, this takes political patronage and backroom deals out of the Mayor's office, and gives a voice to the community.

Second, this reform would improve the complaint process. As recommended by the OCC report to the Board of Supervisors, the OCC Director would be allowed to file charges for a Commission hearing if the Police Chief has failed to do so. According to Mark Schlosberg, the Director of Police Practices Policy of the ACLU of Northern California, "This charter amendment will lead to a Police Commission and Police Department that is responsive to community concerns."

It is a shame when the actions of a few tarnish the reputation of an entire department. The Police Accountability Charter Amendment will ensure that officers who threaten law-abiding residents or use unnecessary force will be held accountable for their actions. It will help build our community's faith in the SFPD, ensuring that our Police Department is able to serve San Francisco.

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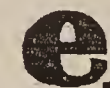
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## WATCHANDO

Alfonso Texidor

### Rezoning Stalls as Interim Rules Expire

The Mission Anti-Displacement Coalition held a special session on July 7 with the Director of the S.F. Planning Department. Over 100 community members packed the Centro del Pueblo Auditorium on Valencia Street to review the latest elements of the MAC's People's Plan for Jobs, Community and Housing, and to hold the Planning Department accountable for the ongoing delays in completing the Mission District Planning and Rezoning process.

The Mission Interim controls expired on July 5 after two years, which, by law, was their maximum duration. The controls were passed by the newly-elected district Supervisors in 2000, and were designed to control the rampant displacement and gentrification of our community. They also gave the Mission District time to have a community planning process. But large landlords and loft developers have opposed the process and want to stall the community's goals. At the July 7th MAC meeting the members made their demands clear: they want the Mission protected with new interim policies while the rezoning is completed. They also demanded that the People's Plan be included in the Planning Department's Zoning Alternatives as part of the Environmental Impact Review (EIR) process.

At the beginning of the Community Planning Process, Mission residents were told that \$500,000 was available for the Environmental Review Process, but the allocation process has been stymied by loft developer-inspired delays and by the budget crunch. District Supervisors Daly and Ammiano made sure that funding was available for the EIR, but Director Green responded to MAC's demands that the EIR process begin by August by indicating that would not happen. Some critics are saying that maybe Green wants to delay the process until after the Mayor's race, to find out if he retains his position as Director.

"MAC is gearing up... to fight to continue to move our planning process forward," said MAC member Eric Quezada.

"We are planning to continue to fight at City Hall to ensure that the People's Plan moves forward... We are prepared to return to direct action tactics to make our community heard," stated MAC member Oscar Grande.

Also present at the meeting was Planning Commissioner Lisa Feldstein, who complimented MAC for its democratic and participatory process, and its ability to discuss planning issues at the grassroots.

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# NEIGHBORHOOD BEAT

by Paul Romo

## Looking to be Heard

As part of her continuing Independent Artist Series, host Melinda Adams offers a two-hour workshop on July 24 focusing on what it takes to be heard in an exceedingly fickle, seemingly indifferent and often uninviting environment--the music industry.

A panel of artists and behind-the-scenes talents share personal experiences, as well as exposing some of the practices and pitfalls of a business that Hunter S. Thompson once described as, "...a cruel and shallow money trench, a long plastic hallway where thieves and pimps run free, and good men die like dogs." Thompson went on to conclude that the business also had a negative side.

In January, Adams began using Spanganga, a 49-seat gallery, to present workshops on intriguing topics like self-publishing and pirate radio (coming in September). The series ends in November. "I was helping out a lot of artists, friends and strangers...trying to hook up beginning artists with more experienced folks but quite often it was hard to schedule meetings and there were some missed connections. Workshops seemed like a good idea." But don't count on a standard workshop with an outline, handouts and a yawn-inducing lecture. "Expect to actually get questions answered, expect to get inside info, expect to meet people, expect to laugh, expect to be part of the SF art community," she says.

According to Adams, folks with a pushy personality seem to have the best chance of being heard in the music industry. "They have to be loud, proud, and very determined: people who don't let rejection or obstacles get in their way or get them down; people that can be creative and do a lot themselves." Spirit and commitment play an important role in the next step towards getting music heard, once it's been recorded.

Adams points out that many college radio DJs and music departments go out and find local bands that are often overlooked by other stations. They may give the group their first bit of airplay, introducing them to a larger audience and perhaps sparking the interest of other stations, as well as creating a buzz in clubs and other venues.

Tom Silverman, CEO of Tommy Boy Records, says that independent labels take 'nothing' and make 'something' out of it. Major labels buy that something and try to make more out of it. Certainly this process has hardened a fair share of souls who've put everything, including their trust, toward a chance at leaving their day jobs, only to see their dream turned over to someone whose definition of 'the enemy' is quite different from their own. "People want to believe that they are getting that big break. They want to trust in the fairy tale. Even people who are all anti big biz and glitz see the record label rep with fancy threads and a list of big bands that he 'made famous' and think 'Yeah! I'm on my way'."

The first rule in the music business, one record label founder warns, is never to act out of desperation, because there is always someone out there looking to sucker you. Offering a basic piece of advice for those who find themselves in the industry with little or no experience, Adams says: find a mentor, get advice, talk to bands you

respect if possible, learn from your mistakes, and work with any success and opportunities you get.

The biggest waste in the music industry, the event coordinator says, is that great bands go undiscovered and end up getting soured. "All true creative spirit that gets crushed is a waste. That, and the large amount of time and money put into cheesy, bubble gum pop bands."

Cautionary tales are as much a part of the business as the ones where timing, coincidence and luck come together. But still, Adams wouldn't discourage anyone from trying to make it in the music industry, or at least getting out there and playing.

"I think knowing how to work in and around the music industry can help you be heard by the greatest amount of people, and that can be important."

The biggest misconception that musicians have about the music industry? "...that it is easy, or that it is impossible to break into."

Speakers: Jay Jaworski--KUSF [Music Director]

Madigan Shive--Bonfire Madigan [Composer/Vocalist]

Maiko Hara--Alternative Tentacles [Retail Promotion & Marketing]

Tony Brooke--Silent Way [Technical Consulting and Recording Company, Founder]

From the garage to stage, from club to CD--Being Heard in the Music Industry Spanganga Gallery 3376 19th Street (at Mission), Thursday - July 24, 6:30-8:30 pm, \$5

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## Literally in Stitches

Sponsoring an upcoming series of literary events, Andrew Scott and Breezy Culbertson, co-owners of *Needles and Pens*, a shop specializing in self-published magazines and handmade clothing called *Needles and Pens*, see their business space as similar to a courier vehicle.

"Imagine a normal sized UPS truck you see driving around the neighborhood. Open the back and step inside: it's about that big ...or small, I should say."

Indeed, the observation seems to fit perfectly with the punk aesthetic that less is more.

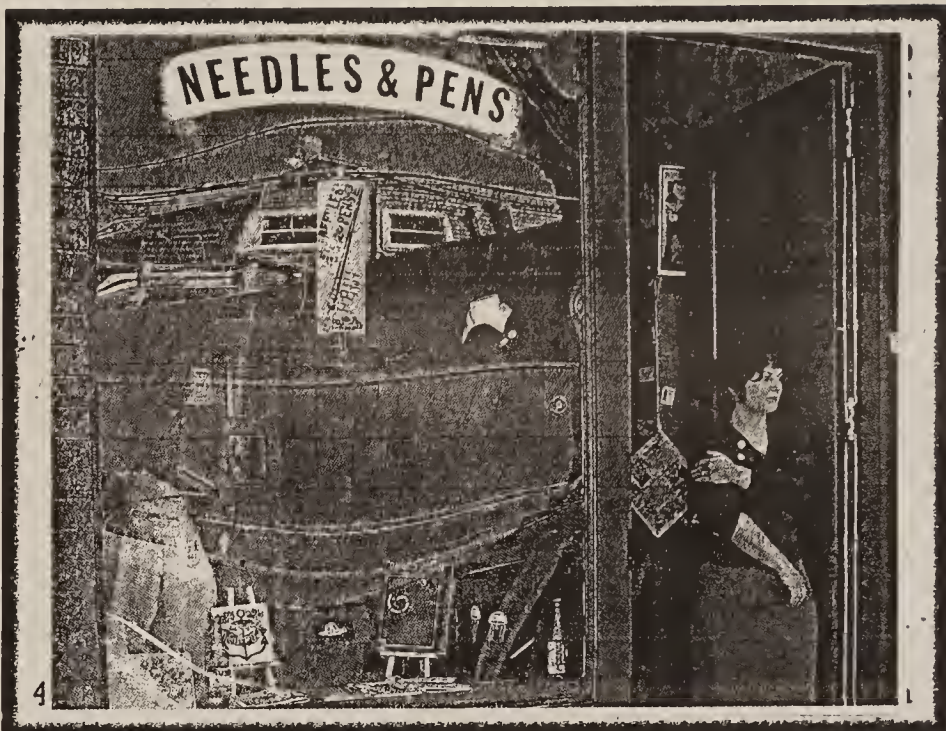
The Ramones, who lived by that credo, became the inspiration for the shop's name after their cover of the Sonny Bono-penned tune, *Needles and Pins*, caught Culbertson's ear.

"It was really tough finding a name that encompasses both clothing and 'zines. Sorry, Sonny Bono, the Ramones were the real inspiration," Scott says.

Clothing and 'zines (as in personal magazines) came together as a result of the pair combining two of their interests into one space. Economically, it was a way they could both accomplish a longtime goal.

"Luckily for us, in the punk and DIY scene the two do overlap in that both are basically small grass-roots endeavors. Our stuff is homemade and, with a small number in circulation, you're not going to find a majority of the things we have for sale at big chain stores... and we like it that way."

Certainly few stores come close to carrying the variety of creative items *Needles and Pens* does.



A carefully stitched, one-of-a kind vinyl handbag depicts a wide-eyed squid intertwined with an unsuspecting whale, while another, displaying lightening bolts colliding with telephone wires, stands out on a table among other handmade objects. Stacked nearby are various shades of eye-catching underwear. On closer inspection, an orange pair seems to have once had a life as a Caltrans shirt.

As in the clothes and accessories, understated humor often shines through in self-published magazines. Citing a few of his favorite titles, like *I Hate This Part of Texas*, *Beer Powered Bicycle*, *Burn Collector* (whose creator writes for the politically aware, *Punk Planet*, which they also sell) and *Notes from the Lighthouse*, the former *Maximum RocknRoll* editor says he could go on listing plenty more.

The shop's approach to merchandise is simple. "Home made, DIY and sorta punky is the favored stuff, not like Haight Street, though--no bondage pants and just-add-water insta-punker gear. We carry a lot of altered thrift store clothes, silk screened art, patches, bracelets and, of course, bags made by local people," Scott says. *Needles and Pens* is located on a stretch of 14th Street between Valencia and Guerrero that is going through a transitional period, thanks to the dot.com fiasco. To illustrate that point, two storefronts and a nearby building are vacant or under construction.

With their shop loosely based on viable 'zine shops in Chicago, Olympia and Portland, both owners work other jobs to sustain their new venture, which includes a concealed art gallery and back patio to provide additional space when they host special events.

To a degree, *Needles and Pens* recalls the reading room at the *Epicenter Zone*, a volunteer-run punk rock co-op that occupied the space above *Clothes Contact* at Valencia and 16th in the '90s, which had literally thousands of 'zines from around the world on display.

"We're small potatoes, but we're doing our best to provide the community with a place where people can sell independent goods...we are the tyrant's foe and the people's friend."

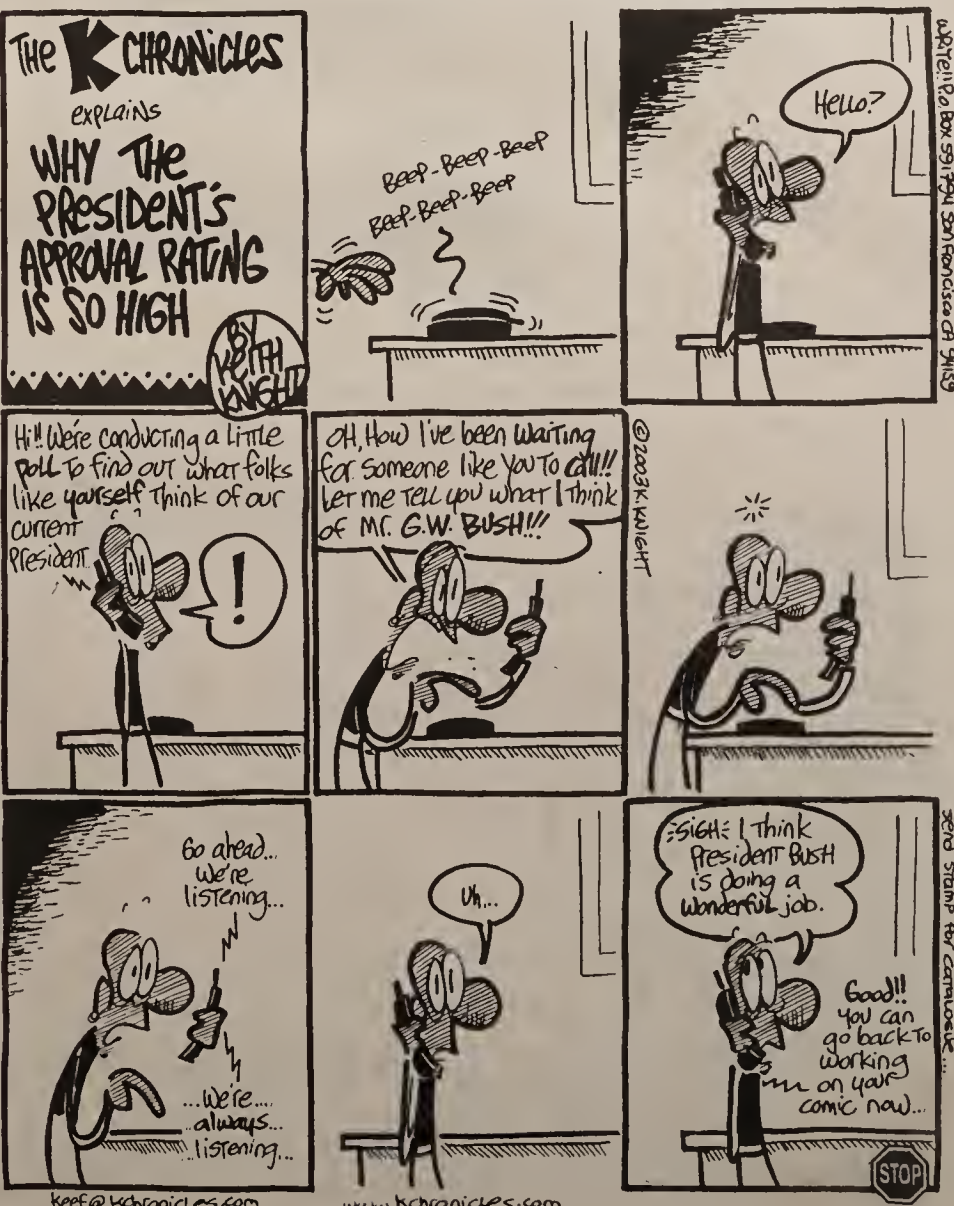
*Needles and Pens*, 483 14th Street at Guerrero, 255-1534, [www.needles-pens.com](http://www.needles-pens.com)

Open 12-7, Thurs.-Sun. Contact to have your 'zine or goods sold.

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# FROM THE BIKE LANE

## Sometimes the Bike Lane is Not Enough

Adam Raney

A couple of years back, I was riding my souped-up Miyata twelve-speed down Folsom Street on one of my many errand-running jaunts around the Mission. I was riding safely to the right of most traffic and was making a point of signaling all of my moves to drivers and other bicyclists.

problem is, it is not an enlargement of rights, but an update in the precision of the language of CVC21202, the current state law that most drivers, bicyclists and enforcement agencies look to in making sense of bicycles on the road.

Just when I thought life was perfect and I really lived in the most bicycle-friendly place in the world, I heard an old pick-up truck pull up frighteningly close alongside me. From the driver's seat an angry man yelled, "Hey, get that thing over on Harrison where you belong - in the bike lane!!"

The most important aspect of AB 1408 is that it specifically sanctions bicyclists moving to the left of parked cars that represent a hazard when their doors open into the bike lane or a lane of traffic. This is a crucial reform of current law. According to Joshua Hart of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, 'the number one cause of injury to bicyclists results from riders colliding with doors.' It is common knowledge that many of these injuries are very serious and have even been fatal.

I was floored. Not at the sentiment, but at the anger and rage with which it was hurled my way. Afterwards, it ended up being one of many funny and bizarre anti-bicycle stories that now overflow from my memory.

Still, the CHP opposes the update.

I had kind of forgotten about the incident until recently, when I heard that there was a battle brewing in Sacramento around an update in bicycle legislation.

Their lengthy response to the proposed legislation, which you can see at

Assembly Bill 1408 is soon to be debated by the Senate Transportation Committee. Sponsored by the California Bicycle Coalition and supported by the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, AB 1408 would clarify bicyclists' rights and responsibilities and, in the future, serve as a solid foundation for educational campaigns aimed at both motorists and bicyclists.

, seems to trivialize the real danger that bicyclists face *vis-a-vis* parked cars. According to Hart, the update is key because it codifies the right of bicyclists to leave the bike lane or take over a whole lane of traffic in the event that they think they are in danger from a door swinging out into the lane.

Although the bill is really a minor update of the current laws' language based on common sense riding protocol and technological advances in bike safety gear (lights, reflective leg bands, etc.), it is being painted by some as a 'bicyclist's special rights' piece of legislation. As usual, every good piece of legislation has an opponent dedicated to burying it. This time, the enemy is none other than the California Highway Patrol.

When I think about why anyone would be opposed to such a common sense improvement of current bike law, I am reminded of the angry guy who yelled at me on Folsom years ago. It seems everybody wants us to just stay in the bike lane, regardless of the injuries we might incur there.

They recently wrote a lengthy critique of the legislation as an unnecessary enlargement of bicyclists' rights. The

If you are interested in learning more about AB 1408, go to the California Bicycle Coalition's page dedicated to the bill: or go to the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition's home page

The Senate Transportation Committee will be debating AB 1408 on July 15. Call State Senator John Burton (916) 445-1412 or State Senate Transportation Committee Chair Kevin Murray (916) 445-8800 to express support for the bill.

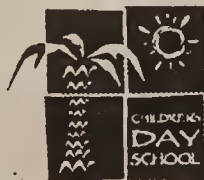
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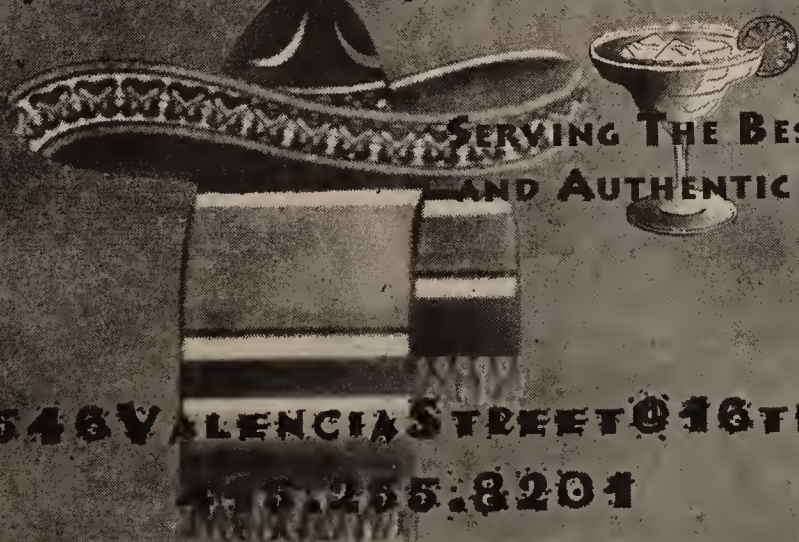
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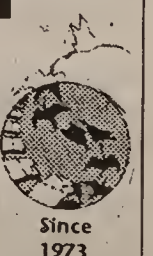
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VOLUME 6 NUMBER 2

Summer 2003

FREE

**"It is only the oppressed who, by freeing themselves, can free their oppressors. An act is oppressive only when it prevents people from being more fully human."**  
**-Paolo Freire**

**HOLISTIC BLOCK PARTY**

By Jay Miranda-Education & Media Intern

Building healthy communities and developing ways of empowering the young people of the Mission district are just a couple of goals that HOMEY (Homies Organizing the Mission to Empower Youth) strives toward. As a result, on Saturday May 17, 2003 HOMEY held our Second Annual Holistic Health Fair on Alabama Street between 24<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Streets. This year we wanted to put a different twist into the concept of holistic health by transforming the event into a block party. From 11am to 6pm the street was closed off and dedicated to the youth and residents of La Mission.

Over two dozen health and community based organizations took part in the event, as well as talented young performers from all over the bay area. The block party opened up with a spiritual ceremony



The HOMEY stage and alter at our Second Annual Holistic Health Fair and Block Party.

directed by the Aztec dance group, Xiuhcoatl. This was a ceremony intended to remind the young people to respect and cherish our indigenous roots. After a few songs and paying our respects to Mother Earth and all living creatures, the tone of the day was set and we were ready to dive into a jam-packed day full of activities. We had booths from the Mission Cultural Center to Healthy Kids, all providing health information as well as ongoing youth programs. For example, Health Initiatives for Youth, New Generations Health Center, Proyecto Contra Sida por Vida, and Planned Parenthood provided tons of literature about the consequences of unprotected sex and provided

information on STDs, safe sex and health education. One of the main goals of the Block Party was to provide youth with the resources available to them so that they may make informed decisions pertaining to their health. We pride ourselves in being a Holistic organization; we invited The Other Place (El Otro Lugar) to attend the Block Party. They provided information about their facility and generously gave massages, did energy work, and readings—all for free.



We also had a speaker, Teresa, a spiritual healer from the Mission, who spoke about the importance of taking care of your SELF, not only physically but emotionally, mentally and spiritually. She has been doing healing circles for many years and finds it very rewarding as well as an essential part of community work. She extended her services to the community and invited everyone to begin meditating in their own personal way. Among the performers, we had an exciting Yoga demonstration by the SF Yoga Society. We also had Diskarte Namin light up the crowd with their lyrics about taking action in changing our communities for the better. DJ Boricua kept a consistent vibe throughout the day. We ended the day with a powerful performance by a group of young people from Horizons Unlimited involved with Omulu Capoeira. The day exerted a great energy that hopefully unveiled the message to strive for the empowerment and progress of our youth and community.



Young people strolled in and out while many of them hung out the whole day making the best of the Block Party. We can honestly say that the Block Party was a success because it exposed a diverse group of youth and adults to holistic health and healing as well as resources and

information available within the community. We want to thank all organizations and attendees that made our Second Annual Holistic Health Fair/Block Party a tremendous success.

**You Gotta Feel Me**

By Wendy Guzman

You gotta feel me	Turning children into fiends,
When you see me bleed	Addicted to failure.
The same blood that runs through our human veins	You gotta feel me
You gotta feel me	When you walk down the road less traveled
When you see a homey in need	Look into the eyes of those
dealing weed, for a taste of fortune	Who unravel, the story of a wanderer.
it brings misfortune to our youth.	Lost waiting to be found by a God being
Youth a new species of warriors	Born from their hearts
Fighting amongst themselves, urban	You gotta feel me
Kings and queens claiming	While my pen bleeds on this paper
Territory, rising from death.	Writing words almost forgotten
You gotta feel me	By those who have it all.
When schools are no longer the key of the future	You gotta feel me
But a war zone, killing dreams.	When tomorrow you wake
	And realize your community
	Has gone up in flames.

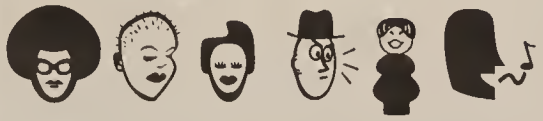
**JUST A  
THOUGHT**

By Jose Mondragon  
Economic Development Intern

IT FEELS LIKE TIME STOPS, WHEN YOU SEE YOUR BOY IN A COFFIN LAYING STILL, NO PULSE. NO BREATH. NOT ONE MORE DAY 4 HIM 2 MAKE BREAD. IT'S A HARD EXPERIENCE 2 LOOSE A HOMEY. THAT'S PART OF LIFE 4 PEOPLE LIKE US 2 SHED THM TATTOO TEARS. TOO MANY R DONE IN THE GAME. IT'S EITHER

U IN OR U OUT. U RIDE OR U GET RIDE ON. LIFE GOES ON WITH OR WITHOUT U. IT DON'T MATTER. I LOVED BOXER BECAUSE HE KNEW HOW TO SHOW LUV. WE ALL KNEW WE LOST A VERY SPECIAL FRIEND WHEN WE SEEN HIM LAYING DEAD, WITH A QUESTION IN OUR THOUGHTS OF "WHO'S NEXT?". BUT I CAN'T SHED A TEAR, CUZ I KNOW I'LL C HIM AGAIN WITH A SMILE ON HIS FACE. REST IN PEACE 2 THE FALLEN IN THE GAME.





SUMMER 2003

YOU GOTTA

FEEL ME



A HOMEY PUBLICATION WITH MISSION DISTRICT YOUTH

## GANGAS EN SAN FRAN

Por Monica Jimenez y Neyli Hernandez-Youth Volunteers

San Francisco, que es lo que hace a esta ciudad diferente a todo alrededor de Califas? Al contrario de L.A., San Fran' ha tenido una rivalidad entre toda la gente: viviendo aqui una rivalidad entre calles, colores, nortenos y surenos. Para mucha gente las pandillas es solo una etapa de adolescencia. Pero lo que no saben es que en este tiempo las cosas y situaciones han cambiado demasiado entre las gangas que se juntan mayormente en la calle Mission. Esta rivalidad entre nortenos y surenos ha ido mas aya que solo un simple juego adolescente. Pandilleros en las calles matandonos unos con otros, lo peor de todo es que la mayoría de nosotros somos de descendencia Latina, ya sea Chicanos, Mexicanos, Hondureños, Salvadoreños, Guatemaltecos, Nicaranguenses y Puertoriquenos. Muchos de los pandilleros empiezan a la edad d 12, 13, 14 en adelante. Nortenos y Surenos tienen su propia forma de distinguirse entre las gangas: nortenos usando bandanas cintos rojos, representando el 14 y surenos usando bandanas y cintos azules, representando el 13 y ambos rifan su barrio. Estas pandillas dentro de San Francisco a llegado a tener un mal record a base de constantes asesinatos y venta de drogas. Los integrantes de las dos gangas van a dar a unos lugares muy conocidos a todo alrededor de San Fran' que se les hace llamar "La Bryant" y "La San Bruno" que son una carcel. Dentro de alli se encuentra muchos integrantes de pandillas, algunos preferiendo dejar sus diferencias y problemas de la calle para ayudarse uno al otro dentro de la pinta. Pero no es siempre asi, muchos de ellos siguen firmes en lo que representan.

Las pandillas para nosotros, los jovenes, es un juego. Pensamos que metiendonos a una pandilla que nuestros problemas se van a acabar. Pero algunos de nosotros nos metemos a las pandillas porque tenemos problemas o porque no sentimos el carino de la familia y con los homeboys lo encontramos. Muchos de nosotros pensamos que las pandillas nos van a sacar de los problemas, pero al contrario cameos a la pinta, a los hospitales, en centros de rehabilitacion o hasta nos morimos. Las pandillas no son un juego y para salir de ellas necesitamos el apoyo de nuestra gente y sobretodo la familia.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MISSION

Way back when the Mission was never like it is now. Back in the day, the Mission was fun and exciting. Everyone could be seen shopping for the food they were going to cook for dinner that night for their families. Today, in the Mission you'll see many people of color. There are many Spanish-speaking people and African-Americans.

Most of the Mission is divided into what people call "Turfs". There are two main turfs that many people know about and criticize. The two main turfs are the North Side and the South Side.

The North Side's color is red and they kick it from about 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and up. From 22<sup>nd</sup> Street until you hit 15<sup>th</sup> Street is the South Side and their color is blue.

The Mission is a hard place to grow up in but back in the day people used to cruise in classics (cars). And if there was a fight, it would come from the shoulders not a knife or a gun. Plus, if a gang fight was to happen they could squash just by playing sports. Now: the streets are just crazy!!!

## The Most Difficult Experience I have had in my Life

*Mission youth have much wisdom to offer, here they describe a time when they have struggled...*

An experience I had that made me sad for some time was when I had just seen my friend after a long time he was killed. I'm worried that I might get killed too.

-Hector Castro-

When my Mom and Dad broke up. It was difficult for me than because it was hard living without my dad, it really hurt me.

-Jonathan Guerron-

The day I had to go live with my grandpa because he is very manipulative and treats me like I'm 10 years old.

-John Mortenson-

My friend moved to Virginia, it was difficult because I couldn't hang out anymore.

-Anonymous-

I'm scared of not finishing high school and not getting accepted to the college that I want to go to.

-Everado Arellano-

There was a time when my brother wasted a hot cup of noodles on his feet, which burned his left foot badly. I grew up thinking it was my fault because I was the one who wanted a cup of noodles.

-LaDethra McFarland-

My mom told me this story about her friend, Diane. Both Diane and her daughter, Juana, were driving home when they noticed that a guy was following them. As Diane was closing her garage door, this guy shot Diane. Juana called the ambulance and the cops. What I learned is that I should of helped out after this incident happened to them.

-Molly Franklin-

I went to Israel to visit my sister, who lives there with her husband and their four children. I didn't eat for about a day because the food was different and they were poor because of all the fighting going on over there. Also there was a time when my Auntie died of a heart condition, I was really sad but she changed my life because she told me before to 'not look back and get on with my life'. She was very smart and helpful.

-Amani Swalim-

*Life is characterized by growth and we grow through experience....*

HOMEY would like to thank the funders that make HOMEY possible: The California Endowment, Levi Strauss Foundation, California Wellness Foundation, Consumer Protection Foundation, Tides Foundation, Ms. Foundation and the Mayor's Criminal Justice Council. A big Thank You!!!







SUMMER 2003

**YOU GOTTA**
**FEEL ME**


A HOMEY PULICATION WITH MISSION DISTRICT YOUTH

## WHAT WAS THE BEST MOMENT IN YOUR LIFE?

*Mission youth describe a moment in time where life brought positive reality...*

The most positive thing that has ever happened to me is that I haven't been shot.  
-Molly Franklin-

I was determined to get on the Honor Roll with a 3.0 grade point average (gpa) and make my mom proud of me. I learned that if I put my best effort and I am determined I can achieve anything.  
-Lonely Aztec-

Playing in a football and baseball league was the best. For me doing sports is not only a good experience but it is good for your health.  
-Jonathan Guerron-

Traveling to other parts of the country was the best. It is fun to leave the state and go to other states. I've been to Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Oregon. It gave me a great feeling to go somewhere far. It is fun to travel by car.  
-Everado Arellano-

Surviving, because you don't want to end up dead or in jail. I will survive. I won't sell drugs or gang bang because I know how to survive. I'm someone that thinks before I act.  
-Hector Castro-

I went to Tahoe to see snow because I had never seen snow before. I learned that snow is basically ice.  
-LaDethra McFarland-

The day I got to finally talk to my sister after so much time.  
-Amani Swalim-

### **Brown Pride**

**Brown Pride is Honor and is No Damn Color  
Red or Blue, Norte or Sur**

**Brown Pride is Work and pride of what You Represent  
Brown Pride are Latinos**

**Latinos, be Proud of Your Culture and Not of a Color**

**Brown Pride is to be Proud of Your Self and Not of the Color  
you wear**

**Brown Pride is Family, Brown Pride are Dreams**

**Brown Pride are Real Friends and Does Not let you Die or go  
to Hell**

**Brown Pride is Freedom and Does Not let you go to La Carcel  
like some of us  
LATINOS.**

Por: Neyli Hernandez y Monica Jimenez

## HOW CAN YOUR VOICE BE HEARD IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

I could make my voice be heard by writing a letter to the President or to Congress. I could also join the Middle Eastern club. I will talk to people and tell them to vote.  
-Amani Swalim-

Spreading the real truth to schools, after school programs, to the San Francisco workers, and to the government. I would ask these people for their opinion about society.  
-Hector Castro-

In my community I can be heard by helping other people, by telling them the wisdom that I know.  
-Santiago Beltran-

**"I can be heard by helping other people, by telling them the wisdom that I know."**

I can join up with other people who agree with me. We then can write a letter to the Mayor's office. I can also write to the President and tell him all about the bad things in my community. We can go on strike or march to city hall and protest.  
-Codice Martin-

I will talk as loud as I can so people can hear me. I will talk about gangs and selling drugs and what that does to you. It is nothing to play with because you could kill someone with that gun. People should want a job to do something with their lives.  
-Marcel King-

One way to change my community and make my voice heard is to write letters to the President and the governor, and see if they can do something, but if not you can do drastic measures. Like get a huge truck and put banners on the side and that will definitely get some attention.  
-Richard Woolbert-

## The Day the Hood Rose Up

By Henry Morales--Economic Development Director

The war had started and Frisco was covered with protesters. On this hot Frisco day the People of Color Contingent was marching through downtown heading toward the Fillmore, screaming chants like: "Hey Bush Get Out the Way" or "Bush is a Wangsta tryin to be a Gangsta". And all the folkers from the Mo' came out of their homes in support against the War in Iraq.

It was a day that diverse people of a variety of ethnicities, backgrounds, and hoods came out of their homes and marched together. I loved it, it felt like the sixties. But forget the sixties, today is 2003 and the movement is stronger than ever. With more days like this we will build a movement to strengthen our communities and make politics represent us.







SUMMER 2003

# YOU GOTTA FEEL ME

A HOMEY PUBLICATION WITH MISSION DISTRICT YOUTH



## WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE CHANGED IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

*A conversation with students from Mission High School.*

Personally, San Francisco should make repairs on the streets and have volunteers help out. There should be more after school clubs and sports teams for us so that we have something to do. I think the City needs more clean parks, hospitals and employment.

-Hector Castro-

I want the rate of weed and drug selling to go down in my community. They need to fix the buildings. We need new nets up at the basketball courts. Give all people in the community a place to live.

-Codice Martin-

My community is really dirty. There is trash everywhere I walk. I want to start by picking up the trash that makes my streets dirty and hopefully people will follow my example.

-Santiago Beltran-

There's a lot going on in the city. I say that for whoever is responsible should help the community by getting rid of drugs and all the trash on the streets. Drugs are bad for kids and teens. As well as for myself, I can't go out without having a bad feeling about what may happen to me.

"For people who live in the community we need our homes to be fixed, rent control, water and much more... I would be happy if people respected our community and aim for these appropriate goals."

The streets need to be kept safe from killings and other harmful things. For people who live in the community we need our homes to be fixed, rent control, water and much more. We wouldn't like to see our community just to go to waste and see the streets in worse conditions. So I would be happy if people respected our community and aim for these appropriate goals.

-Carolina Valencia-



Families gather in front of their front stoops in protest to the War in Iraq. This was at one of the many protests held here in San Francisco's McLaren Park.

## EXIT EXAM: NO WAY OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL!

By Wendy Guzman—Education & Media Intern

Our education is going down the drain as we speak! While you are reading this article, our teachers are being dismissed, our students are being denied a fair education, and our schools are lacking classes in the curriculum, all because there is insufficient funds for California's education system. But if this were an article on the budget crisis, I would go on and on about how our schools are missing money.

What I am here to tell my community is that there is a new way the government is keeping youth from getting a decent education, or should I say, their high school diploma. The method is through the test called The Exit Exam. This test was brought on by the State to implement high school testing, in order to improve the quality of education by pressuring kids to do better in school. What they do not know is that this exam does the total opposite.

Kids are actually not trying to do better. The fear of taking this test is making our youth drop out of school. And who can blame them? The exam consists of material students have never gone over in class!

Jose Luis Pavon, the youth program coordinator at YMAC (Youth Making A

Change) stated: "This Exam is an excuse to keep kids out of school. It is denying a fair education for all. What is going to happen to the kids that come from other countries and do not understand the English language? What will happen to those kids who do not know the material? They come here for a better education and opportunity, yet it is impossible."

And very impossible it is. This exam was given to college students as an experiment, and even they failed it! What does that tell you about the whole issue? In my opinion, it is clear that there is no way out of high school. In this school year 65 students were denied their high school diplomas, and more than half were straight A students with a 4.0 GPA.

It is not fair for students to work so hard for 12 years, and when their senior year arrives, they are denied their diploma. How many youngsters will fail? Lets be realistic, probably more than half. And the worst part is, it is not their fault. The school system is not preparing their students for these exams. Are we just supposed to know the material?

Is our state government aware that by implementing this test, crimes and selling drugs will be increase? Jails will be the new schools. Youth will not want to go to school. Therefore the street will be the better option. And this really sucks, because there are plenty of kids, who believe it or not, want to go to school. Could this be another way of keeping minority youth from becoming the future? Or just another way to make schools a business?

Keith Norman a Physical Education teacher at International Studies Academy High School said: "High school should be preparing children for college, not some stupid test. It seems that businesses try to run schools. Businesses and schools do not mix. And if in fact this exam is official, they should prepare the kids from day one,

so they could pass it."

The Exit exam is one of the most controversial topics out there right now. With budgets being cut and teachers gone, how are we supposed to learn how to overcome this obstacle in our way to success. Every student and teacher is against it (or at least everyone I know). What I need my

community to know is that their kids are being kept from a fair education. And I know that you as a friend, parent, family member, or student reading this article feel me all the way.

Lets try to get rid of this enemy that is slowly destroying the future of our kids. And I, as a voice for the youth in our community, tell you I do not want to see my people fail because we were denied access to what will make us succeed: EDUCATION!



HOMEY interns Jay and Wendy graduate this year from ISA.

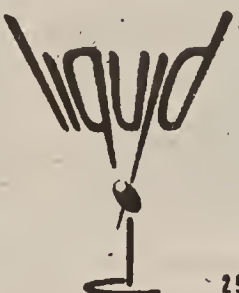
## ARE YOU READY ?????

My ex-partner and I had to decide if we were going to keep our three-week old baby. This experience was hard for her and me because we originally agreed on keeping the baby. I thought I loved her but after some thinking about the pros and cons we decided to not keep the baby because of our financial situation and that we both had different dreams. The hardest part for me is that I had to let go of one of my dreams: to have a baby boy. I have learned to never trust a condom and to use other kinds of birth control methods alongside with a condom. And also to make sure that I am truly in love with the person that I get into a relationship with.

-Lonely Aztec-







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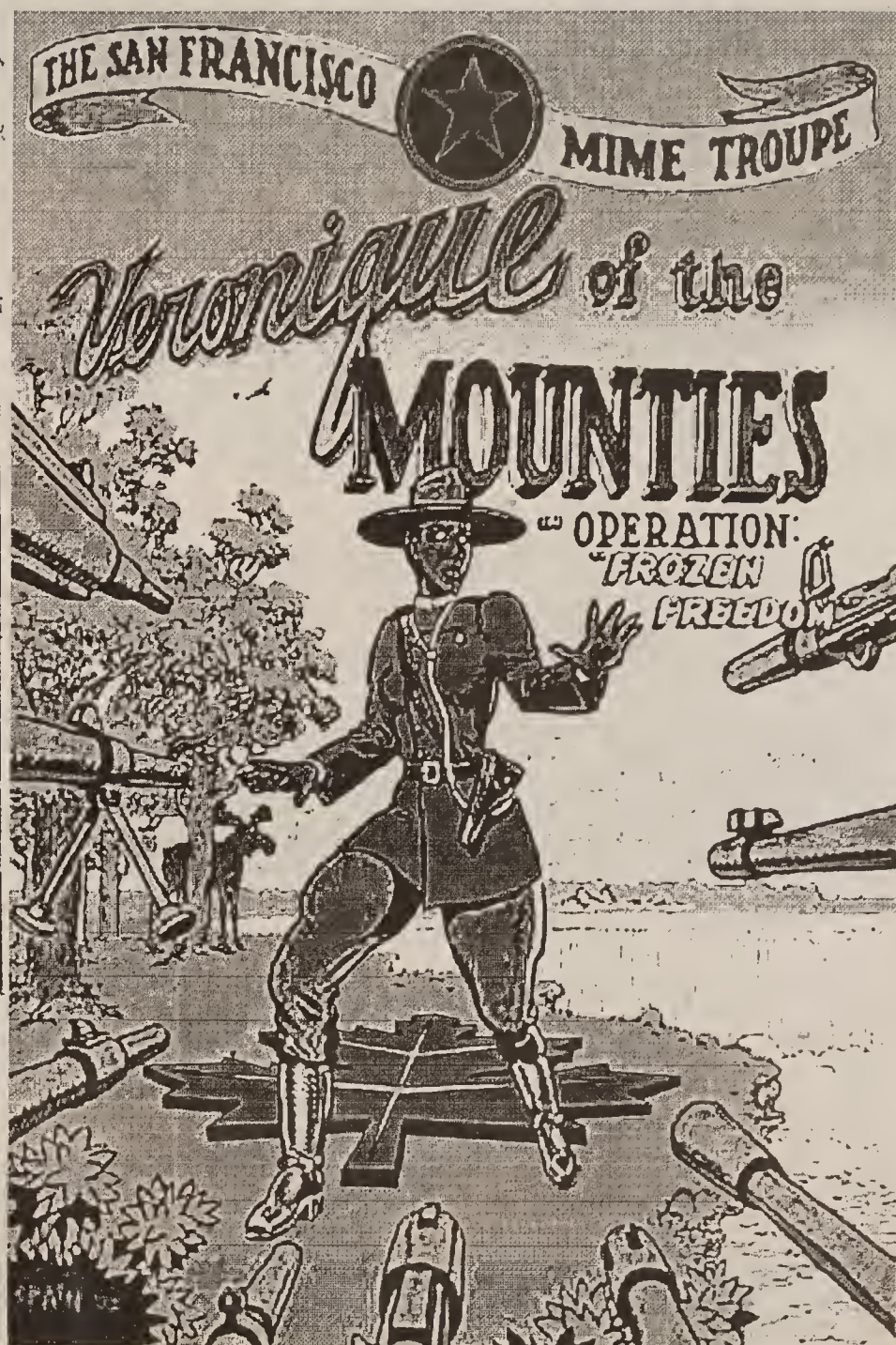
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### Veronique of the Mounties

## New Mime Troupe Show

by Ryder Miller

The performances are magnificent, and we should be proud of the wonderful cast of chameleons, including Ed Holmes, Velina Brown and Keiko Shimosato, in Veronique of the Mounties, the SF Mime Troupe's new rollicking satire on U.S. imperialism and the state of the world. The painted mountains of Canada set the stage for this chilly tale of U.S. aggression gone awry. The premise of the play is a bit silly: as Ed Holmes, playing Vice President Dick Cheney, explains in the beginning, our country has been involved in a number of international military capers, including "Operation Abundant Justice" in Korea, "Mucho Freeo" in Venezuela, "Just Pay Back" in France, and "It's About Time" in Cuba. Now, the U.S. plans to attack Canada to root out all the terrorists hiding there in "Operation Frozen Freedom".

The Canadians' best hope of solving their problem with U.S. encroachment is to send a Mountie on a mission to recover their stolen national talisman, a petrified Maple Leaf which has the power to cloud the minds of would-be aggressors and to convince them of the worthlessness of our cold neighbor to the North. "It was cheaper than a missile defense system," a Canadian general explains.

In Washington, while George W. Bush is out of town, Dick Cheney propositions the beautiful Condoleeza Rice (Velina Brown) to be his running mate in a bid for the presidency in 2008, as his pacemaker barely keeps his amorous interests in check.

"But we'll need somebody to blame for all the things that have gone wrong," she says.

"George," says Cheney.

"George?" she asks.

"That guy is so incompetent he almost lost a fixed election," the Vice President replies.

Meanwhile, Veronique of the Mounties (also played by the beautiful Velina Brown) sneaks across the border to steal back the authentic, petrified and magical Maple Leaf which will protect Canada. She soon encounters Harry, an old hippie (also played by the masterful Ed Holmes), and they discuss the sad state of the USA, which Veronique calls a land of phony elections and mansions surrounded by poverty, like "a banana republic without the bananas."

"We let it happen, bit by bit," Harry the Hippie points out, saying we have become a nation of boiled frogs.

"We are like frogs that have been put in the water while the water heats, becoming so accustomed to the water that we don't leave before it boils and kills us!" Harry reflects that he should have done some coke and watched out for himself, and maybe he could have wound up in the White House. Or maybe he should have stayed in Vietnam and wound up working for Nike.

"At least you have a mission," Harry says to Veronique of the Mounties.

Finally, with the aid of a resourceful librarian and barkeep, Veronique attains her difficult goal of making America feel safe without threatening everyone.

At the end of the show, Mime Troupe star Ed Holmes confides that he doesn't want to go on playing Dick Cheney year after year (in spite of the uncanny natural resemblance), and implores us to replace Those Guys in Washington as soon as possible.

As always the SF Mime Troupe leaves us with some visions of how to proceed with humor and grace in a sad and dangerous world. They are masters of style and charm, and we hope they will continue to return each summer and light the way.





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### 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Metronome Ballroom Showcase

The Metronome Ballroom proudly presents its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Student/Teacher Dance Showcase "Fascinating Rhythms" at the Cowell Theater in San Francisco at 8:00 pm on August 15 and 16, 2003. Directed by Julie Lowe, former principal dancer with the Oakland Ballet Company. "Fascinating Rhythms" features a cast of over 50 dancers from students to professionals. Audience members will be dazzled by a variety of dance styles including: Argentine Tango, Salsa, Cha-Cha, Waltz, Ballroom, Brazilian Samba, Foxtrot and Swing. "Fascinating Rhythms" also features live music and the Metrotones, a jazz vocal quartet. Tickets are now available at the Cowell Theater Box Office (415-345-7575). Ticket prices are \$25 in advance, or \$30 at the door. Student,

senior, and group discounts available. The Cowell Theater is located in the Fort Mason Center, at the corner of Buchanan Street and Marina Boulevard in San Francisco.

Since 1991, the Metronome Ballroom has continued to offer top quality dance instruction from Ballroom to Swing and everything in between for all ages. With over 45 weekly beginning to advanced classes and six dance parties every weekend, the Metronome Ballroom has been voted the "Best Place to Learn to Dance in San Francisco" by the SF Weekly and the Bay Guardian, and is located at 1830 17<sup>th</sup> Street in San Francisco. For more information, call 415-252-9000.



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### MARIJUANA POLICY COMMUNITY FORUM

The Drug Policy Alliance, in coordination with Assemblyman Mark Leno, the San Francisco Medical Society, the San Francisco Medical Cannabis Task Force, Americans for Safe Access, California NORML, and the Marijuana Policy Project, invite you to a Community Forum regarding the Implementation of Proposition S, San Francisco's Commitment to Medical Marijuana, on Tuesday, July 22, 2003 from 9:30 am to 3:00 pm at First Unitarian Church, 1187 Franklin Street (at Geary).

As we move forward with the Implementation of Proposition S, your input and participation are needed! San Francisco has supported Medical Marijuana for over 25 years. In 2002, San Francisco voters passed Proposition S, calling for the City and County of San Francisco to explore the possibility of cultivating and distributing Medical Marijuana.

The Drug Policy Alliance is proud to host a Community Forum during which we will hear from various experts in the field of Medical Marijuana, as well as introducing and discussing various implementation models. Make sure your voice, ideas, and concerns are heard. The goal is to include, inform, and unite the community as we proceed toward action on this groundbreaking legislation.

Please R.S.V.P. to 415.584.7675 or email EllieSchafer@msn.com

### "NAKED IN AUGUST" SHOW SET FOR CITY ART

The Fourth Annual "Naked In August" exhibit will be held at CITY ART Gallery in August. This year's exhibit will include nude art from a number of San Francisco artists using different styles and media.

An opening reception for the month-long exhibit will be held Friday, Aug. 1, from 7 to 10 p.m. at the 828 Valencia Street gallery. The public is encouraged to attend the opening reception and meet the artists. The annual "Naked in August" shows began four years ago from a suggestion made by one of the cooperative gallery's member artists, August Wood. The exhibit has become one of the most popular themes at CITY ART. Core Member Katie Gilmarin said the diverse backgrounds of member artists showing in August create unique approaches to the nude through the use of a different media, such as charcoal, oil and photography.

CITY ART differentiates itself from other local galleries in that the artists who create the art – not sales representatives – operate and manage the gallery. "Our member artists not only hang and sell their art, they have the opportunity to help run a gallery by volunteering to work shifts throughout the month," she said.

The "Nude In August" show runs through Aug. 31. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Sunday from Noon to 9 p.m. CITY ART is located at 828 Valencia Street between 19th and 20th Streets. CITY ART can be reached at 415-970-9900.

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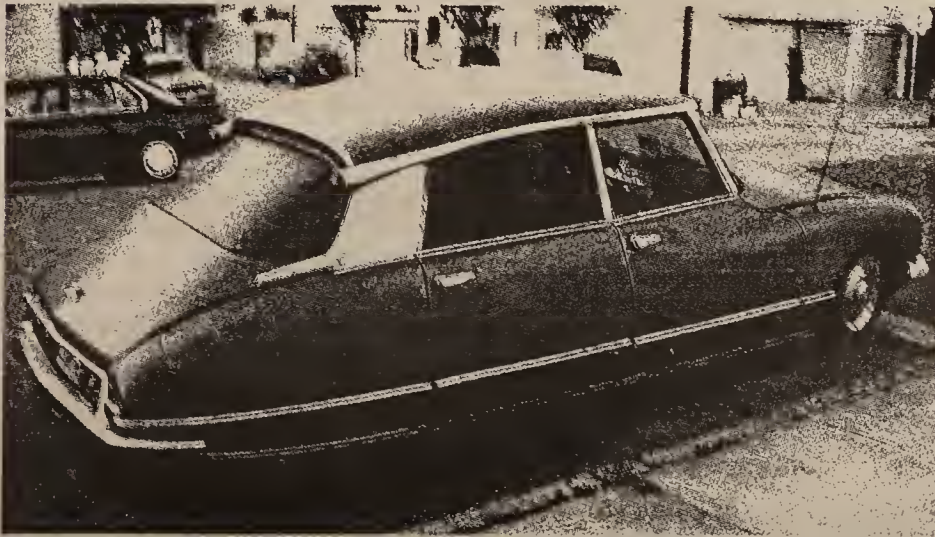
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Photo by Ciro Matarazzo

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Photo: Ciro Matarazzo

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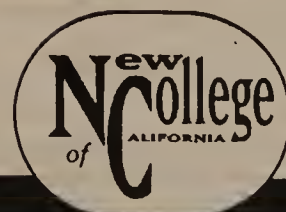
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# Poetry Korner

By Alfonso Texidor



Avotcja

Avotcja is a Poet/Musician/Playwright Photographer/Teacher. She is multi-talented, and immensely proud of her African-American-Puerto Rican cultural roots. A daughter of dancers, she was born and raised in New York City, and she has played music and written poetry and short stories since she was a child. She moved to Los Angeles when she was a teenager, where she worked as farm worker, waitress, factory worker, and barber by day, and as a poet/musician every night. She has lived in Europe, and eventually she made the San Francisco Bay Area her home. She writes in English, Spanish, and Spanglish, she has been published in the U.S., in Mexico, and in Europe, and she has appeared in more anthologies than she can remember. A self-described *sound junkie*, she has shared the stage with the legendary Betty Carter in N.Y.C., with Peru's Susana Baca, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Luis and Bobbi Cespedes, John Handy, Nikki Giovanni, Sonia Sanchez, Piri Thomas - and a long list of other performing artists. She has weekly radio shows on KPOO and KPFA radio, where she plays Salsa, Kazz, Blues, and other forms of music. Avotcja never minces words, and Avotcja doesn't mess around.

*Avotcja will be performing her spoken-word poetry at:*

**Mission Cultural Center**  
2868 Mission Street  
(between 24th and 25th Streets)

on Wednesday, July 23rd at 7:30pm.

*There will also be a guest appearance by Thelma Flores, a very powerful Latina poet.*

*Open microphone will follow.*

*Program Host: Alfonso Texidor*

## Cactus Flower

The Cactus ... a remarkable plant  
Sister to Black woman,  
Who too,  
has been made prickly & hard on the outside  
But somehow,  
Still remains on the inside ... soft & gentle  
And where there is no visible water  
You can always drink from her,  
For she is a reservoir of water & life  
Even in the driest of deserts  
And when you need protection,  
You can always depend on her  
for she is as dangerous as the angry machete  
And when hunger strikes,  
She is the finest & tastiest of foods  
She is, at the same time,  
both medicine & nourishment  
The Cactus is strong & unbelievably adaptable  
It is impossible to destroy her,  
as she is self sustaining ... when necessary  
She leaves her seed everywhere,  
And her children grow under any & all conditions  
She blooms in both the snow & the night time  
And her flowers are always beautiful  
She is indomitable  
© Avotcja

## Concrete Children

When my children cried the first time  
My precious babies...  
They screamed so damn loud  
And I.... with less than nothing  
Had nothing but my loving  
Mmmm, mmm, mm..... it hurt!!  
Only God knows how much it hurt!  
My poverty & helplessness  
My impotence  
Caused me pain ... great pain  
A whole lot of pain full of sadness  
Their hungry crying  
Falling on deaf ears  
In this world of reinforced concrete  
This world with no heart  
Without feeling  
Only the crying of my children  
Who screamed so loud  
Even the earthquake was jealous!

In these days  
In this sophisticated world  
Full of hardened concrete  
And uncountable riches  
"Old money" mansions  
And limosines without end  
When my children cry  
My children..... armed  
Like the concrete  
There is no weeping  
No screaming  
Or even a tear  
Not a sound  
Only an icy silence  
and the whole earth trembles  
In fear!!!  
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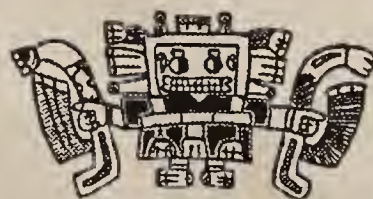
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**CONTRIBUTING JOURNALISTS:**  
Library Lady, Sonny Smith,  
Resurreccion Cruz, Paul Romo,  
Adam Raney, Keith Knight,  
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# Library Lady



## Mission Branch

### Watchmen

By Alan Moore

1987

Who watches the watchmen?

With the Summer release of 20th Century Fox's *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, based on the graphic novel by Alan Moore, I thought it fitting to devote this month's column to graphic novels and comics. The Mission Branch's collection of comic books can be found in both the teen and adult sections of the library. Here's a list of some of the newer titles in our collection. I've also added some older titles; ones I consider classics. And toward the end, I've also included some fantasy fiction written by graphic novel authors, as well as some movies based on graphic novels. If you feel that I've missed your favorite title, please let me know. And request that we purchase it the next time you visit your local branch.

### Diary of a Teenage Girl: An Account in Words and Pictures

By Phoebe Gloeckner  
2002

Loosely based on Ms. Gloeckner's own adolescence, this graphic novel (more novel than graphics) is set in San Francisco in the 1970s. It's a coming-of-age story full of dysfunction, drugs and love triangles.

### Krazy & Ignatz: Comprising the Complete Full-Page Comic Strips, 1925-1926

By George Herriman  
2002

Comics Journal named Krazy Kat the greatest comic strip of the 20th century. This collection, put out by Fantagraphics Books, might convince you of the same. Here's a strip about a Kat trying to win the affections of a mouse to no avail.

### Rebel Visions: The Underground Comix Revolution, 1963-1975

By Patrick Rosenkranz 2002

This collection of 60s counterculture comics focuses on the works of artists including Robert Crumb, Robert Williams, Art Spiegelman, Spain Rodriguez, and Trina Robbins. Along with illustrations of their art, you'll find a year-by-year recap of the events and news that precipitated this artistic legacy, including references to Gary Arlington and the Mission's own S.F. Comic Book Co. For more about comic history, we also have the 1989 movie *Comic Book Confidential*.

### One Hundred Demons

By Lynda Barry 2002

This is a collection of semi-autobiographical stories by the creator of Marlys, CRUDDY and the Freddie Stories. Touching and funny.

### The Adventures of Tintin

By Hergé

These collections of classic Tintin comics come as three complete adventures in one volume. San Francisco Public Library carries all seven volumes.

Some people claim Alan Moore is the best graphic novelist ever. *Watchmen* is an excellent story using the concepts of superheroes and the end of the world in a not-so-predictable way. The story itself is so layered and smart, bringing in child abuse, causes of crime, and social psychology, that you'll have a hard time putting the book down. If you like Alan Moore, we also carry *Promethea* and a copy of the movie *From Hell* based on Moore's graphic novel by the same name.

### Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth

By Chris Ware  
2000

I love this comic. Chris Ware touches on the feelings of sadness, abandonment and isolation in family histories like no other comic writer. I recommend this comic collection not only for its depth, but also for its styling and illustrations.

### Ghost World

By Daniel Clowes  
1998

Your local branch carries this comic, as well as the 2001 Terry Zwigoff movie based on the Eightball story of two high school female friends growing up and growing apart.

One of my favorite graphic novelists is Neil Gaiman. Mission Branch carries many of his Sandman graphic novels as well as some of his fantasy fiction.

### Coraline

By Neil Gaiman 2002

This is an excellent story about a young girl who must fight her fears and save her parents and the souls of two other children. It's a wonderful story about courage and love. The audiobook, found on both cassette and compact disc, is read by Neil Gaiman and contains original music by a band called the Gothic Archies. It's Stephen Merritt of the Magnetic Fields, in case you were wondering.

If you enjoy *Coraline*, you may want to read *American Gods* or *Neverwhere*. We also carry the Hayao Miyazaki (*Spirited Away*) video *Princess Mononoke*, which was adapted for the screen by Neil Gaiman.

We also carry copies of *Love and Rockets* by the Hernandez Brothers, and the usual assortment of Marvel and DC superheroes, along with the ever-popular Japanese manga series like *Ranma 1/2*.

In the Mission Branch Children's Room:

Wednesday, July 23, 2003 at 11 a.m.  
Chiquy Boom – Clown, magic, music, and games. South American style.

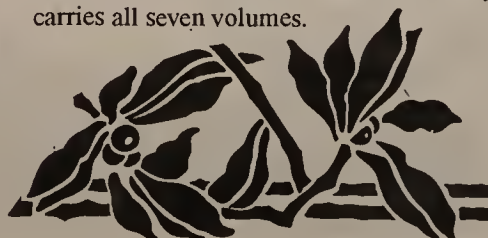
Wednesday, July 30, 2003

Colibri – South American music duo at 3 p.m.

Tuesday, September, 23, 2003 at 4 p.m.

Author of *Goldie Locks has Chicken Pox*, Erin Dealey, visits the library.

Email comments and suggestions to:  
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07-22-03	<b>LABORFEST EVENT:</b>
7:00 PM	Labor, Globalization, and the Struggle in Europe
07-24-03	<b>The Assassination of Julius Caesar:</b>
7:30 PM	A People's History of Rome - Michael Parenti.....
07-26-03	<b>LABORFEST EVENT:</b>
3:00 PM	Work and the State of Labor - Reg Theriault.....
07-26-03	<b>OFF-SITE EVENT:</b>
8:00 PM	Are Prisons Obsolete? Angela Y. Davis.....

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## La Post-Modern Curandera by Resurrección Coyoltzin Cruz

### Little Gods

People have assumed when they see my altars or hear my advice to pray to this or that saint, that I am "muy catolica," very Catholic. Don't judge a book by its cover. It is true that I was baptized and raised Roman Catholic, and the dogma dictates that, like it or not, whether I reject the religion or take on another, I will always remain a Catholic. But be that as it may, I've come full circle with Catholicism: from complete rejection to the freer wiccan traditions, to paganism and women's spirituality, with lots of overlap and richness from all these practices.

On my return, I have found ways to make Catholicism meet my needs as a curandera and an actualized, spiritual woman. The "saints" I use are often really ancient gods in their newest guise. For example, St. Brigid of Ireland is a demotion of an older, triple goddess of fire, learning and healing. When Christianity infected Ireland, the regional deities were changed and/or brought into the Christian pantheon. This happened everywhere around the world where indigenous peoples resisted the worship of a new god that didn't fit their culture. Sometimes they didn't even have to resist: it was forced upon them in violent and culturally devastating ways.

This of course, happened in Mexico. But the indigenous people found ways to imbue the new saints with attributes of their older gods, their true worship and beliefs going underground. The priests were not fooled, and were (and are) very angered by this practice, which continues to this day. Some priests accept it; others try to sabotage it by forcing changes on the people, like changing the traditional day, or forbidding "paganistic" practices that might include dancing or sacrifice (nowadays, only of flowers or animals). But, one way or another, it does endure and continue.

Even if they are actual historical people who were saints, they still have the ability to listen to us and grant our wishes. Yes, they do it themselves. They have godlike power. I don't believe they are mere intermediaries with God and I never have, even when I was a good Catholic. How they do it I don't know, and I don't care. Catholicism is merely a convenient place to locate these Little Gods and find out who to ask for help.

Although the saints I and many other Latinos pray to are in the Catholic pantheon, I think of them as "Little Gods" that have nothing to do with Catholicism. At least, not the way I use them. It's supposed to be a sin even to think that the saints have power of their own. Supposedly you pray to them, and they ask God for you. I wonder how many people are really fooled. I have personally witnessed their powers and abilities in my life and the lives of others, and can attest to their strange and miraculous reality. This doesn't make me a very good Catholic at all. Quite the opposite. And I like it that way.

And the Big God? That's everything, the world, the Universe, consciousness; and Big God is something we all have within us.

*La Post Modern Curandera* is by Resurreccion Cruz. If you have spiritual or health questions that aren't being addressed by your religious and medical establishments, send Rez your questions at [lacurandera@earthmonsterbooks.com](mailto:lacurandera@earthmonsterbooks.com). Ms. Cruz is the author of "Santora, The Good Daughter," Xipactli Publishing, available at Modern Times Books, Books, Inc, and Barnes & Noble.com.

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Max is an inventor, although he hasn't invented anything much except for a sensor device you hook to a toilet that makes the seat go down when you walk away from the bowl. 'This could be one of the greatest domestic inventions of all times...even capable of making peace between the sexes once and for all,' reads the quote above its picture in the little, second-rate, sharper-image-like catalog he was able to sell the device through.

Just below him (but he hasn't met them yet) live two darling ladies, mother and daughter, Ina and Dolores, 39 and 21 years of age, respectively. And also living with them (sometimes) is (sometimes) street hoodlum and (sometimes) Dolores' boyfriend, Gus. Max has just moved into the building, into room 403 upstairs. Having been fired from Johns Hopkins University, and soon thereafter divorced, he made the move out here a couple months ago. Gus met him on the street in front of the main entrance to the building that sits right at 16<sup>th</sup> and Mission. Max brought him up to his place, with scribbled papers and big books and wires and screwdrivers and a cat with a wandering eye creeping gently around, empty Pabst cans all over the place (he's a real intellectual mad scientist kinda guy), and they talked into the wee hours about Kant and revolution and Chuck Taylor sneakers and smoking GPC.

Gus came into his girl's place around 2 in the morning and slept on the couch, and in the morning, over fried plantain and coffee, he told them about Max.

"WHO and revolution?" asked Dolores.

"Kant!"

"Oh. Of course."

Ina, listening quietly, felt a little stirred-up, in some inexplicable way. But Dolores was just plain annoyed.

"It'd be a good time for a revolution... Max said," explained Gus. "With the country the way it is, and all."

"What way?"

"You know. All taken over and shit."

"What's this guy all about, anyway?" said Ina.

"Moved out here from Baltimore or something, got divorced. He's an inventor, got something he made to make the toilet seat go down automatically. He's got all kinds of underwear pinned up on the wall, 'cause he's trying to invent some new kind of underwear or something, so his whole place has all kinds of panties and underwear. He's not weird, though. I think he's o.k."

Then Dolores left, and Ina came over to the couch and lazed around with Gus, and put her moves on him the way she would. Yeah, that's right: the mother had a little thing she was tryin' to do with the kid. Get him to melt in her arms, a slight seduction fantasy she was unable to admit. And Dolores knew all about it, and that's why she was saving herself, to see if Gus would fail or pass the test.

"I told Max all about you two," said Gus.

"Us two? What?" said Ina.

"How you two are sirens, basically, toying with my head. And I can't get away."

This went on as Ina lounged around as sexily as she could, putting a record on, making coffee, lying on the floor in nothing but a t-shirt and tight pants, as the sun shot a little light through a window and a cat curled up in its warmth.

Later that evening, Max heard a knock on his door. It was Ina.

"Uh, hi. My toilet isn't working right now. Uh, you're the guy that just moved in, right? Could I use your bathroom?"

So he let her in.

"What's with all the underwear all over the place?" she said.

"I'm working on something"

"What?"

"Inflatable underwear."

"Why?"

"In case there's a sudden flood."

"You can't swim?"

"I'd rather float."

"Oh."

"Like, if a subway broke down under the bay, the underwear inflates into a raft."

"So let's see it."

"Well, it's not ready, I haven't found the right type of underwear."

And then Ina slipped off her underwear from underneath her skirt and tossed it to Max and, of course, she thought she was being quite sexy, and I suppose she was, though Max just looked at her kind of sadly and chuckled, offered her a beverage, and lit a smoke.

This went on for a bit, and Ina never did use the bathroom, 'cause that was all bull anyway, and she thought she might like him, but she wasn't sure.

Weeks passed by, and Gus came up almost every night to talk about somebody and revolution, always coming back in the end to his troubles with Dolores and Ina: how Dolores was saving herself, and how this was bad because Gus was a man with needs, y'know? And how Ina was playing with him, and that was bad, 'cause sometimes he thought he might just give in, and how if it could all just be reversed-- everything in his life-- and how the whole world just seems flipped, and if it could all be flipped... "Flipped how?" Max would say, and then Gus would say, "Flipped so that the only people plotting revolutions in a tiny, little, shitty apartment off 16<sup>th</sup> were the despots that were leading the world into war, and terror, and everything else bad they could think of. That kind of flipped," he would say, and Max would nod as he looked out the window at the folks running around down below with their pants down around their knees, or honking away in their metal coffins, and all the telephone wires draped over the street like chains.

And then Dolores came to visit Max. Just last week. She introduced herself, and said he might as well make friends with her, since he probably knew all about her by now anyway. And he said "O.K." And was Ina chasing him? He said, "Kind of," and he pulled out some beers and lit a smoke. "Must be hard to be Ina's kid," he said, but not mean.

"Yeah, kind of. You gotta know when to tell her to get off it. That's all."

"And Gus is a real bright kid."

"Yeah, he's alright. He just wants to get laid, though; and what can I say? I'm a virgin." Then there was a long pause. "So you're an inventor?"

"I guess on this day, today, I am. I just finished something I've been working on."

"Well let's see it."

And Max studied her face for a moment, and then said, "Okay," and he made her turn towards the corner, with her hands covering her face, while he got it all ready. Then he got up on his work table and told her, "Okay, turn around!" and she did; and what she saw was a forty four year-old man in some rather bulky plastic yellow underwear, standing on a table with a beer can in his hand and a smoke in his mouth, and she froze, then yelped and, basically, had a very bad reaction.

"What the hell is this? Are you some kind of pervert?"

"No, no, no, you got the wrong idea."

"I'm getting the hell out of here."

Max started to panic, and imagined, all in a flash, the cops coming, and him getting busted for some kind of under-age perversion, and this all getting back to his ex-wife in Baltimore, and so he panicked even more, and got off the table, and she started to beeline for the door, but Max was in the way and his underwear was bulky, so it made him clumsy, and he tried to get out of the way as she was going towards the door. But she wasn't even looking, so angry and confused was she, and they made no eye contact and Max, being so uncoordinated now in the bulky underwear, sort of stumbled into her and they collided! At this point, she thought he was trying to stop her or, worse, grab her, or, even worse,

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grobe her, and so she wrestled with him a little bit, and they were all shoved up between the table and the door, and now she was backed into the door, more or less, and the bustle must have ruptured his underwear a slight bit, and it began to inflate, and everything was panic and confusion and the damn underwear kept inflating, pushing against the table and, therefore, squeezing them up against the door together, the big inflatable tip of a 15 foot life raft crushing her like the tip of some giant blimp, and all she could do was reach for a pen she knew was in her back pocket, and try to grab the pen with the little bit of space she had to move her wrist, and stab the inflatable blimp pressing up against her, stab it, stab the motherfuckin' big molesting invading evil inflatable underwear life raft, until it finally popped.

Debris was everywhere. The cat escaped. Max lay on his back on the floor, the apartment destroyed and covered by a deflated life raft. Somewhere, someplace, a flood.... Dolores sexually assaulted somehow, slouched against the door and crying, Gus and Ina doing it downstairs, the kids on the street, with their pants halfway down their legs, spitting at the homeless who were begging to the honking mobile metal coffins, who were shaking their fists at the pedestrians as the propaganda blared from the radios, all hidden from the sky by a web of giant black cables that hung from our rooftops. Some kind of revolution in the air.

***I'm letting everybody know that this record I made: 'this is my story, this is my song' is out in record stores right about now from the jackpine social club label. they just re-did their website and I think it has some movie of me when I was a kid breakdancing ('swift' was my breakdance name) and also singing a billy joel song (just the way you are)- not to be missed highly embarrassing stage antics from a young sonny smith!***

**[www.jackpinesocialclub.com](http://www.jackpinesocialclub.com)**

***the cd release is august 23rd at café du nord, with kelley stoltz and garth steel klippert also on the bill...***



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